

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM GV FR
SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS: GUINEAN REACTION TO FRENCH
SOCIALIST PARTY PUBLICITY

REF: CONAKRY 991

1. BEGIN UNCLAS. FOLLOWING THE GUINEAN REACTION
(REFTEL) TO AN ALLEGED DECLARATION ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS
VIOLATIONS IN GUINEA BY THE FRENCH SOCIALIST PARTY (PS),
THE PS ON JUNE 10 ISSUED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT WHICH
APPEARED IN LE MONDE OF JUNE 12-13.

"AT NO TIME IN THE RECENT PAST HAS THE PS MADE A
PRONOUNCEMENT ABOUT GUINEA. IN ANY CASE, THE POSITION
OF JAMES SOUMAH DOES NOT ENGAGE THE DIRECTION OF THE
PS. A SIMPLE MEMBER, HE SOUGHT TO CONSULT NEITHER HIS
LOCAL SECTION NOR THE INTERNATIONAL SECTION ABOUT THE
APPROPRIATENESS OF PUBLISHING HIS REPORT ON
'VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN GUINEA'. THIS
DOCUMENT HAS BEEN SENT TO US AND WE SHALL STUDY IT."

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2. LE MONDE OF JUNE 4 HAD CARRIED A FULL COLUMN
ARTICLE ON A 30-PAGE REPORT BY SOUMAH HIGHLY CRITICAL
OF GUINEAN HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES. SOUMAH WAS
DESCRIBED AS A FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOCIAL
AFFAIRS IN GUINEA, AS HAVING BEEN CONDEMNED IN
ABSENTIA TO DEATH, AS CURRENTLY BEING A PS MUNICIPAL
COUNSELOR IN DRANCY, FRANCE, AND AS A PARTICIPANT IN

THE JUNE 7 PS NATIONAL CONGRESS AT NANTES WHERE HE INTENDED TO SOLICIT THE "MEDIATION" BY THE PS OF "POLITICAL REPRESSION" IN GUINEA. THE PS ITSELF WAS NOT IDENTIFIED AS BEING IN ACCORD WITH SOUMAH'S VIEWS.

3. LE MONDE OF JUNE 11 REPORTED RADIO CONAKRY'S CONDEMNATION OF SOUMAH'S REPORT AND OF THE PS AND THAT THE PAPER HAD RECEIVED A CABLE FROM THE GUINEAN MINISTER OF INFORMATION DENYING THAT SOUMAH HAD EVER BEEN A MEMBER OF THE GUINEAN GOVERNMENT, SOUMAH SUBSEQUENTLY TOLD LE MONDE THAT HE HAD BEEN SECRETARY OF STATE FROM DEC 1959 TO FEB 1960. END UNCLAS.

4. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. COMMENT: SEKOU'S OVERREACTION TO SOUMAH'S CHARGES ALREADY HAS GENERATED ENOUGH PUBLICITY TO MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PS TO IGNORE TOTALLY SOUMAH'S REPORT DURING ITS NANTES CONVENTION, AN ACTION IT OTHERWISE PROBABLY WOULD TAKE. GISCARD'S APPROVAL OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS, IF NOT NECESSARILY OF HIS TACTICS FOR ACHIEVING THEM, HAS STOLEN ONE OF THE SOCIALISTS' FAVORITE THEMES. IN AN EFFORT TO REGAIN THE INITIATIVE IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD, THE PS MIGHT NOW FEEL FORCED TO TAKE UP THE GUINEAN CASE, DESPITE THE SOFT SPOT MANY PS MEMBERS RETAIN FOR "SOCIALIST, ANTI-GAULLIST" GUINEA. IF THIS HAPPENS, THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT WOULD HARDLY BE ABLE TO IGNORE WHAT IS GOING ON IN CONAKRY AND ITS CURRENT POLICY OF LEANING OVER BACKWARDS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH GUINEA MAY SUFFER.
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BUT GIVEN MORE IMPORTANT PROBLEMS, THE PS AT NANTES MAY SIDE-STEP THE ISSUE. AT ANY RATE, THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT IS UNLIKELY TO ALLOW A REAL SET-BACK IN RELATIONS, UNLESS, OF COURSE, SEKOU KEEPS UP THE VERBAL BARRAGE.
GAMMON

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